City of Alexandria, Virginia

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 21, 2015

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: T&ES STAFF

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM # 6 – TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
               (TIP) BALANCE ALLOCATION

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ISSUE: Reprogramming of Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) balance of $930,000 in the FY 2016 budget.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Transportation Commission (Commission) receive the update and provide guidance to staff regarding the reprogramming of Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) balance of $930,000 in the FY 2016 budget.

DISCUSSION: City Council approved the FY 2016 Budget on May 7, 2015. In developing the FY 2016 budget, WMATA's operating and capital programs put significant pressure on City funding sources, and in particular, its transportation sources. Due to uncertainty in the level of funding that would be required for WMATA, staff initially budgeted conservatively. This resulted in a fund balance of $930,000 in the FY 2016 budget adopted by Council. Prior to adoption of the budget, Council directed staff to work with the Commission and Council in the fall to identify potential transportation projects that could be funded with the $930,000 remaining in the TIP. The proposed reprogramming of the TIP balance was reviewed by the Transportation Commission at its September meeting, and adjustments were made to account for DASH Technology needs in the TIP balance request. Because this funding is for projects with FY 2016 implementation, funding priorities were developed for consideration based on immediate FY 2016 needs. Proposed funding priorities follow below.

Sidewalk Capital Maintenance: By federal law, the City is required to make sidewalks and adjacent curb ramps accessible when doing any alterations (i.e. repaving) to the streets. Thus, sidewalk maintenance must be funded proportionately to the street resurfacing budget, which has grown in recent years. The current operating budget does not provide sufficient funding to reconstruct accessible concrete or brick sidewalks. This project provides $200,000 in funding to supplement on-going repairs with reconstruction funding that additionally functions to improve pedestrian safety. The funding will reduce the backlog of sidewalk maintenance requests, allowing the city to fulfill approximately 15 requests for sidewalk maintenance.

Holmes Run Greenway: This project involves the construction of significant upgrades to existing facilities along the Holmes Run Greenway, running north from North Ripley Street to the point beneath Interstate 395. The existing facilities currently provide access under Interstate 395 and Van Dorn Street via a tunnel, underpass, fair weather crossing, and concrete trail system built into the concrete sidewall embankments lining the flood channel of Holmes Run. The trail is currently in very poor condition, is poorly lit, and has slippery and unsafe conditions. With the project approaching final design, the cost estimate has been refined, and $500,000 will be needed to begin construction later this fiscal year. This project is funded primarily through a VDOT grant, which has deadlines in FY 2016 for the project to move into the construction phase.

DASH Technologies: To improve the efficiency of the DASH system, this $230,000 project funds the purchase and installation of Automated Passenger Counter (APC) technology on a total of 20 buses and 5 trolleys. The project is a component of the larger Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) Real Time Bus Information System project, which is currently being implemented.

This technology will provide DASH with reliable, stop specific passenger boarding and alighting data. This data is essential for accurate reporting, farebox ridership validation, route evaluation, and development and scheduling. Implementation of the APC technology will help DASH improve routing and scheduling, and will help DASH provide better service to customers. The use of APC technology in transit has been proven to improve efficiency and reduce operating costs while reducing the reliance and costs associated with outside consultants and temporary resources. This project was also included in the City's recent House Bill Two (HB2) grant application; however, because of the immediate need to fund this project, and because of the uncertainty in obtaining funds through the competitive HB2 grant process, staff proposes reprogramming TIP funds for this purpose. The DASH technology application for HB2 is scalable, and funding—if awarded—could go to other projects listed on the application.